

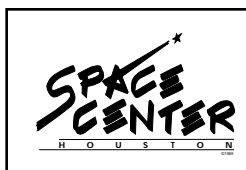


National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas



Rendezvous reunion

Gemini Program employees get together to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Gemini 6, 7. Photos on Page 3.



Teacher assembly

Teachers participate in the International Space Station Educators Conference at Space Center Houston. Photo on Page 4.

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New retirement program offers more options

Careers Plus+ provides alternatives for early, optional retirement

Employees eligible for retirement now have more options to consider when planning their future. "Careers Plus+," JSC's new retirement transition program, provides alternatives to help potential retirees make the transition.

Available only to JSC employees eligible for early or optional retirement, the Careers Plus+ Program is made up of three options: Trial Retirement, Phased Retirement, and Partners in Education. JSC and the employee both sign an agreement which sets forth

the specifics of individual arrangements. These options expire June 28, with the exception of Partners in Education, which expires Aug. 30.

In Trial Retirement, employees voluntarily retire from civil service and "try out" retirement for 12 to 18 months. After that period, if employees decide retirement isn't for them, JSC will hire them back, either full-time or part-time, as reemployed annuitants at their same grade and step. A reemployed annuitant is a civil service retiree who

returns to work as a civil servant.

Under the Phased Retirement option, employees voluntarily retire from civil service and are hired back, as early as the next business day, as reemployed annuitants in positions that make use of their NASA experience. Employees are limited to 1,040 hours a year for up to two years, working either part-time or full-time until the annual limit is reached. Employees either propose work arrangements or respond to announcements identifying needs. This option allows

employees to scale back work hours for up to two years to help prepare for retirement.

Partners in Education helps employees transition to teaching positions, generally in the math, science and engineering fields at the junior college or university level. Employees voluntarily retire and are hired back as reemployed annuitants, working up to 1,040 hours per year for up to two years. These hours are spent teaching at a suitable educational institution and supporting JSC's

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STS-75 crew plans Monday trip to Florida

Work is going smoothly to prepare *Columbia* for its Thursday launch and the crew said Wednesday it is ready to begin unreeing the line on the Italian-built Tethered Satellite System.

The reflight of TSS, an experiment first flown on STS-46 in the summer of 1992, will be a scientific adventure aimed at understanding the possibilities for putting the "enabling" tether technology to work in space in ways that could help generate power for the International Space Station or take measurements of Earth's environment.

The initial flight of the system yielded extensive data about the behavior of the tether system close to the shuttle, but difficulties with the deployment mechanism did not allow the tether to be extended completely. The plan for TSS-1R includes deployment out to a full length of 12 1/2 miles.

"We have a really fine crew," said Lead Flight Director Chuck Shaw, who also lead the STS-46 flight control team. "We are really pleased with the quality of the crew and the experience of the previous Tethered Satellite System flight. We've got a lot of challenges. It's not going to be a real easy, laid-back operation. I don't think there's anybody here that shies away from that."

The second shuttle mission of the year and the 75th in the history of the program is designed to investigate new sources of spacecraft

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NASA photo

The STS-75 flight crew stand in the white room just outside *Columbia* at Launch Pad 39B during a break of the Terminal Countdown Demonstration Test at Kennedy Space Center. From top to bottom left to right are Pilot Scott Horowitz, Mission Specialist Claude Nicollier of the European Space Agency, Commander Andy Allen, Mission Specialist Maurizio Cheli of the European Space Agency, Payload Specialist Umberto Guidoni of the Italian Space Agency, Payload Commander Franklin Chang-Diaz and Mission Specialist Jeff Hoffman.

Projects move to shuttle program

More changes position JSC for lead role

JSC Director George Abbey introduced several organizational changes Friday intended to further on-going efforts to streamline and promote efficiency and position JSC to lead the agency's space station and space shuttle programs.

Changes include abolishing the JSC Projects Office and moving most of its functions to the Space Shuttle Program Office. The Orbiter Project Office will move intact to the shuttle program and report to Manager Tommy Holloway. The Russian Project Office will move intact to the Phase 1 Program Office and report to Director Frank Culbertson, and the EVA and Crew Equipment Projects Office will be separated.

The EVA Integration and Operations Office and the EVA Management Office will form the nucleus of the new EVA Project Office. The crew and equipment and other functions of the EVA and Crew Equipment and Projects Office will move to the shuttle program. A plan to transition the remaining JSC Projects Office personnel to other organizations is in work.

Also, Jane Stearns has been assigned acting director of business management. Stearns will continue as director of information services, and has been tasked with developing a plan to further streamline and consolidate the work in both organizations in the coming months.

The moves are in response to last week's announcements by NASA Administrator Daniel S. Goldin that JSC is now lead center for the Space Shuttle and International Space Station Programs, as well as for Space Operations and EVA operations. All are pending NASA Headquarters approval.

"Other changes may be made as the need arises," Abbey wrote in the announcement. "All of the changes take best advantage of the talent and facilities we have at this center."

"These changes represent a significant shift in responsibility for JSC. As we assume these responsibilities with an agencywide perspective, I am confident our team has what it takes to meet the challenges that lie ahead."

Today's rodeo events

A variety of "go western" events will take place today around the center.

- Child care rodeo events: Face Artist Sean Collins will paint children's faces from 9:30-10:30 a.m.

- Leslie Maxwell will bring small animals for children to handle from 10:30-11:30 a.m. at the JSC Child Care Center.

- Bldg. 3 Cafeteria rodeo events: Andrea Bryant and her horse will demonstrate "Cutting Horse" techniques at 11, 11:40 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

- Sherry Dodson will discuss rodeo scholarships at 11:20 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.

- Dane Dunigan demonstrates rodeo saddle and roping techniques from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

- Country and Western Line Dancing Instruction from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

- Best Western Outfit contest from noon-12:30 p.m.

- Trail Ride: Trail ride begins at 2:30 p.m. at the Gilruth Center trav-

els around the center and returns to the Gilruth Center.

- Rodeo Lift-off party: A Rodeo Lift-off party is set for 4:30-9 p.m. at the Gilruth Center's old pavilion. The Original River Road Boys will provide Country and Western music. Tickets cost \$5 and include beer, wine, soft drinks, hot dogs and chicken wings. Gates open at 4:30 p.m. with the band starting at 5 p.m.

- Cafeteria rodeo special: Barbecue dinner: includes beef, sausage, beans, coleslaw, potato salad, Texas toast, onion slice and a drink for \$5.25. Barbecue beef on a bun with potato salad, ranch beans and onion slice for \$3.25.

Events continue next Friday in the Bldg. 3 Cafeteria with Vaquero Mary Jane Dorman and Richard Hergert discussing several rodeo events from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and Stan Horton will give a roping demonstration from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.



JSC photo by Benny Benevides

BLACK HISTORY—JSC Director George Abbey, right, talks with keynote speaker Herbert Carter, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, during the Black History Month observance at the Gilruth Center Ballroom. Carter is a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, the original cadre of the 99th Fighter Squadron in World War II. Carter flew 77 missions. The Black History month observance was hosted by the Equal Opportunity Programs Office and the 1996 Black History Committee.

JSC to picnic at Astroworld

The Employee Activities Association has set the JSC annual family picnic for next month at Astroworld.

The picnic is scheduled from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. March 31 at the A&W Ranch inside Astroworld.

The A&W Ranch will be designated for JSC and contractor employees only and will include all-you-can-eat barbecue, face painters and other coordinated activities.

Tickets will cost \$12 per person for everyone over the age of 3. The tickets include the barbecue dinner, all Astroworld rides and attractions, and a special "free" ticket to Holiday in the Park.

Tickets go on sale at the Exchange Store on March 8. The \$12 price is limited to the first 3,800 tickets sold. After that, the price will be \$20. Astroworld season ticket holders may purchase a ticket for \$6 and receive all the benefits of the regular JSC ticket.

For more information call the Exchange Store at x35350.